

## IV

DECEMBER, 1854

(ÆT. 37)

*Dec. 2.* Got up my boat and housed it, ice having formed about it.

*Dec. 3. Sunday.* The first snow of consequence fell in the evening, very damp (wind northeast); five or six inches deep in morning, after very high wind in the night.

Snowbirds in garden in the midst of the snow in the afternoon.

*Dec. 4.* P. M. — Down railroad to Walden.

Walden went down quite rapidly about the middle of November, leaving the isthmus to Emerson's meadow bare. Flint's has been very low all summer. The northeast sides of the trees are thickly incrustated with snowy shields, visible afar, the snow was so damp (at Boston it turned to rain). This had none of the dry delicate powdery beauties of a common first snow.

Already the bird-like birch scales dot the snow.

*Dec. 5.* *Very* cold last night. Probably river skimmed over in some places. The damp snow with water beneath (in all five or six inches deep and not drifted, notwithstanding the wind) is frozen solid, making a

crust which bears well. This, I think, is unusual at this stage of the winter.

*Dec. 6.* To Providence to lecture.

I see thick ice and boys skating all the way to Providence, but know not when it froze, I have been so busy writing my lecture; probably the night of the 4th.

In order to go to Blue Hill by Providence Railroad, stop at Readville Station (Dedham Low Plain once), eight miles; the hill apparently two miles east. Was struck with the Providence depot, its towers and great length of brick. LECTURED in it.

Went to R. Williams's Rock on the Blackstone with Newcomb and thence to hill with an old fort atop in Seckonk, Mass., on the east side of the Bay, whence a fine view down it. At lecture spoke with a Mr. Clark and Vaughn and Eaton.

After lecturing twice this winter I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, *i. e.*, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am and value myself for is lost, or worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. I feel that the public demand an average man, — average thoughts and manners, — not originality, nor even absolute excellence. You cannot interest them except as you are like them and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience come to me than that I should go to them, and so they be sifted; *i. e.*, I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse.

To read to a promiscuous audience who are at your mercy the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with far away is as violent as to fatten geese by cramming, and in this case they do not get fatter.

*Dec. 7.* Walked through Olneyville in Johnston, two and a half or three miles west of Providence.

Harris tells me that since he exchanged a duplicate Jesuit Relation for one he had not with the Montreal men, *all* theirs have been burnt. He has two early ones which I have not seen.

*Dec. 8.* P. M. — Up river and meadow on ice to Hubbard Bridge and thence to Walden.

Winter has come unnoticed by me, I have been so busy writing. This is the life most lead in respect to Nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case you are merely getting your living; in the second you live as you go along. You travel only on roads of the proper grade without jar or running off the track, and sweep round the hills by beautiful curves.

Here is the river frozen over in many places, I am not sure whether the fourth night or later, but the skating is hobbly or all hobbled like a coat of mail or thickly bossed shield, apparently sleet frozen in water. Very little smooth ice. How black the water where the river is open when I look from the light, by contrast with the surrounding white, the ice and

snow! A black artery here and there concealed under a pellicle of ice.

Went over the fields on the crust to Walden, over side of Bear Garden. Already foxes have left their tracks. How the crust shines afar, the sun now setting! There is a glorious clear sunset sky, soft and delicate and warm even like a pigeon's neck. Why do the mountains never look so fair as from my native fields?

*Dec. 9.* Surveying for T. Holden.

A cold morning. What is that green *pipes* on the *side-hill* at Nut Meadow on his land, looking at first like green-briar cut off? <sup>1</sup> It forms a dense bed about a dozen rods along the side of the bank in the woods, a rod in width, rising to ten or twelve feet above the swamp. White Pond mostly skimmed over. The scouring-rush is as large round as a bulrush, forming dense green beds conspicuous and interesting above the snow, an evergreen rush.

C. says he saw three larks on the 5th.

*Dec. 10.* P. M. — To Nut Meadow.

Weather warmer; snow softened. Saw a large flock of snow buntings (quite white against woods, at any rate), though it is quite warm. Snow-fleas in paths; first I have seen. Hear the small woodpecker's whistle; not much else; only crows and partridges else, and chickadees. How quickly the snow feels the warmer wind! The crust which was so firm and rigid is now suddenly softened and there is much water in the road.

<sup>1</sup> *Equisetum hyemale* (scouring-rush, shave-grass).

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Dec. 11. P. M. — To Bare Hill.

C. says he found Fair Haven frozen over last Friday, *i. e.* the 8th.<sup>1</sup> I find Flint's frozen to-day, and how long?

We have now those early, still, clear winter sunsets over the snow. It is but mid-afternoon when I see the sun setting far through the woods, and there is that peculiar clear vitreous greenish sky in the west, as it were a molten gem. The day is short; it seems to be composed of two twilights merely;<sup>2</sup> the morning and the evening twilight make the whole day. You must make haste to do the work of the day before it is dark. I hear rarely a bird except the chickadee, or perchance a jay or crow. A gray rabbit scuds away over the crust in the swamp on the edge of the Great Meadows beyond Peter's. A partridge goes off, and, coming up, I see where she struck the snow first with her wing, making five or six as it were finger-marks.

Dec. 14. P. M. — With C. up north bank of Assabet to bridge.

Good sleighing still, with but little snow. A warm, thawing day. The river is open almost its whole length. It is a beautifully smooth mirror within an icy frame. It is well to improve such a time to walk by it. This strip of water of irregular width over the channel, between broad fields of ice, looks like a polished silver mirror, or like another surface of polished ice, and often is distinguished from the surrounding ice only by its reflections. I have rarely seen any reflections

<sup>1</sup> How much before?

<sup>2</sup> [Channing, p. 99.]

— of weeds, willows, and elms, and the houses of the village — so distinct, the stems so black and distinct; for they contrast not with a green meadow but clear white ice, to say nothing of the silvery surface of the water. Your eye slides first over a plane surface of smooth ice of one color to a water surface of silvery smoothness, like a gem set in ice, and reflecting the weeds and trees and houses and clouds with singular beauty. The reflections are particularly simple and distinct. These twigs are not referred to and confounded with a broad green meadow from which they spring, as in summer, but, instead of that dark-green ground, absorbing the light, is this abrupt white field of ice. We see so little open and smooth water at this season that I am inclined to improve such an opportunity to walk along the river, and moreover the meadows, being more or less frozen, make it more feasible than in summer.

I am singularly interested by the sight of the shrubs which grow along rivers, rising now above the snow, with buds and catkins, — the willows, alders, sweet-gale, etc. At our old bathing-place on the Assabet, saw two ducks, which at length took to wing. They had *large* dark heads, dark wings, and clear white breasts. I think they were buffle-headed or spirit ducks.

Dec. 15. Up riverside *via* Hubbard Bath, P. M.

I see again a large flock of what I called buntings on the 10th, also another flock surely not buntings, perhaps *Fringilla linaria*. May they not all be these? How interesting a few clean, dry weeds on the shore

a dozen rods off, seen distinctly against the smooth, reflecting water between ice! I see on the ice, half a dozen rods from shore, a small brown striped grub, and again a black one five eighths of an inch long. The last has apparently melted quite a cavity in the ice. How came they there?

I saw on the 11th an abundance of dried huckleberries on Bare Hill, still holding. They are such as dried ripe prematurely on account of the drought. I do not perceive any sweetness. How handsome the narrow, regularly toothed brown leaves of the sweet-fern now above the snow!—handsome in their sere state! The buds of the bass are pretty now, they are a clear light red on short ash (?) twigs.

*Dec. 18. P. M.* — Down railroad *via* Andromeda Ponds to river.

Snowed a little finely last night and this forenoon. I see a few squirrels' tracks in the woods and, here and there in one or two places, where a mouse's gallery approached the surface. The powdery surface is broken by it. I am surprised to find in the Andromeda Ponds, especially the westernmost one, north side, an abundance of decodon, or swamp loosestrife. Where a partridge took to wing I find the round red buds of the high blueberry plucked about the swamps.

*Dec. 19. P. M.* — Skated a half-mile up Assabet and then to foot of Fair Haven Hill.

This is the first tolerable skating. Last night was so cold that the river closed up almost everywhere, and

made good skating where there had been no ice to catch the snow of the night before. First there is the snow ice on the sides, somewhat rough and brown or yellowish spotted where the water overflowed the ice on each side yesterday, and next, over the middle, the new dark smooth ice, and, where the river is wider than usual, a thick fine gray ice, marbled, where there was probably a thin ice yesterday. Probably the top froze as the snow fell. I am surprised to find how rapidly and easily I get along, how soon I am at this brook or that bend in the river, which it takes me so long to reach on the bank or by water. I can go more than double the usual distance before dark. It takes a little while to learn to trust the new black ice. I look for cracks to see how thick it is.

Near the island I saw a muskrat close by swimming in an open reach. He was always headed up-stream, a great proportion of the head out of water, and his whole length visible, though the root of the tail is about level with the water. Now and then he [stopped] swimming and floated down-stream, still keeping his head pointed up with his tail. It is surprising how dry he looks, as if that back was never immersed in the water.

It is apt to be melted at the bridges about the piers, and there is a flow of water over the ice there. There is a fine, smooth gray marbled ice on the bays, which apparently began to freeze when it was snowing night before last. There is a marbling of dark where there was clear water amid the snow. Now and then a crack crosses it, and the water, oozing out, has frozen on

each side of it two or three inches thick, and sometimes as many feet wide. These give you a slight jolt.

Off Clamshell I heard and saw a large flock of *Fringilla linaria* over the meadow. No doubt it was these I saw on the 15th. (But I saw then, and on the 10th, a larger and whiter bird also; may have been the bunting.) Suddenly they turn aside in their flight and dash across the river to a large white birch fifteen rods off, which plainly they had distinguished so far. I afterward saw many more in the Potter swamp up the river. They were commonly brown or dusky above, streaked with yellowish white or ash, and more or less white or ash beneath. Most had a crimson crown or frontlet, and a few a crimson neck and breast, very handsome. Some with a bright-crimson crown and clear-white breasts. I suspect that these were young males. They keep up an incessant twittering, varied from time to time with some mewing notes, and occasionally, for some unknown reason, they will all suddenly dash away with that universal loud note (twitter) like a bag of nuts. They are busily clustered in the tops of the birches, picking the seeds out of the catkins, and sustain themselves in all kinds of attitudes, sometimes head downwards while about this. Common as they are now, and were winter before last, I saw none last winter.

*Dec. 20. 7 A. M. — To Hill.*

Said to be the coldest morning as yet. The river appears to be frozen everywhere. Where was water

last night is a firm bridge of ice this morning. The snow which has blown on to the ice has taken the form of regular star-shaped crystals, an inch in diameter. Sometimes these are arranged in a spear three feet long quite straight. I see the mother-o'-pearl tints now, at sunrise, on the clouds high over the eastern horizon before the sun has risen above the low bank in the east. The sky in the eastern horizon has that same greenish-vitreous, gem-like appearance which it has at sundown, as if it were of perfectly clear glass, — with the green tint of a large mass of glass. Here are some crows already seeking their breakfast in the orchard, and I hear a red squirrel's reproof. The woodchoppers are making haste to their work far off, walking fast to keep warm, before the sun has risen, their ears and hands well covered, the dry, cold snow squeaking under their feet. They will be warmer after they have been at work an hour.

P. M. — Skated to Fair Haven with C.

C.'s skates are not the best, and beside he is far from an easy skater, so that, as he said, it was killing work for him. Time and again the perspiration actually dropped from his forehead on to the ice, and it froze in long icicles on his beard. Yet he kept up his spirits and his fun, said he [had] seen much more suffering than I, etc., etc.

It has been a glorious winter day, its elements so simple, — the sharp clear air, the white snow everywhere covering the earth, and the polished ice. Cold as it is, the sun seems warmer on my back even than

in summer, as if its rays met with less obstruction. And then the air is so beautifully still; there is not an insect in the air, and hardly a leaf to rustle. If there is a grub out, you are sure to detect it on the snow or ice. The shadows of the Clamshell Hills are beautifully blue as I look back half a mile at them, and, in some places, where the sun falls on it, the snow has a pinkish tinge. I am surprised to find how fast the dog can run in a straight line on the ice. I am not sure that I can beat him on skates, but I can turn much shorter. It is very fine skating for the most part. All of the river that was not frozen before, and therefore not covered with snow on the 18th, is now frozen quite smoothly: but in some places for a quarter of a mile it is uneven like frozen suds, in rounded pancakes, as when bread spews out in baking. At sundown or before, it begins to belch. It is so cold that only in one place did I see a drop of water flowing out on the ice.

*Dec. 21. P. M.* — To Walden and Fair Haven Ponds and down river.

It snowed slightly this morning, so as to cover the [ground] half an inch deep. Walden is frozen over, apparently about two inches thick. It must have frozen, the whole of it, since the snow of the 18th, — probably the night of the 18th. It is very thickly [covered with] what C. calls ice-rosettes, *i. e.* those small pinches of crystallized snow. — as thickly as if it had snowed in that form. I think it is a sort of hoar frost on the ice. It was all done last night, for we see them thickly clus-

tered about our skate-tracks on the river, where it was quite bare yesterday.

We are tempted to call these the finest days of the year. Take Fair Haven Pond, for instance, a perfectly level plain of white snow, untrodden as yet by any fisherman, surrounded by snow-clad hills, dark evergreen woods, and reddish oak leaves, so pure and still. The last rays of the sun falling on the Baker Farm reflect a clear pink color. I see the feathers of a partridge strewn along on the snow a long distance, the work of some hawk perhaps, for there is no track.

What a grovelling appetite for profitless jest and amusement our countrymen have! Next to a good dinner, at least, they love a good joke, — to have their sides tickled, to laugh sociably, as in the East they bathe and are shampooed. Curators of lyccums write to me: —

DEAR SIR, — I hear that you have a lecture of some humor. Will you do us the favor to read it before the Bungtown Institute?

*Dec. 24.* Some three inches of snow fell last night and this morning, concluding with a fine rain, which produced a slight glaze, the first of the winter. This gives the woods a hoary aspect and increases the stillness by making the leaves immovable even in considerable wind.

*Dec. 25.* To New Bedford *via* Cambridge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The entries for Dec. 25th and 26th are printed in *Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, edited by Anna and Walton Ricketson, Boston, 1902.]

I think that I never saw a denser growth than the young white cedar in swamps on the Taunton & New Bedford Railroad. In most places it looked as if there was not room for a man to pass between the young trees. That part of the country is remarkably level and wooded. The evergreen pines very common in the low ground. At New Bedford saw the casks of oil covered with seaweed to prevent fire. The weed holds moisture. Town not lively; whalers abroad at this season.

Ricketson has Bewick's "British Birds," two vols.;  
 " " "Æsop's Fables," one vol.;  
 " " "Select Fables," one vol.,  
 larger (partly the same);  
 " " "Quadrupeds," one vol.

Has taken some pains to obtain them. The tail-pieces were the attraction to him. He suggested to Howitt to write his "Abodes of the Poets."<sup>1</sup>

Dec. 26. At Ricketson's.

I do not remember to have ever seen such a day as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us. I went to walk in the woods with R. It was wonderfully warm and pleasant, and the cockerels crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there, that they

<sup>1</sup> [Homes and Haunts of the British Poets.]

had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream, which was only sixty miles from Nantucket at the nearest, or one hundred and twenty miles from them. In midwinter, when the wind was southeast or even southwest, they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of about a degree in latitude between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate.

The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their Christmas evergreen. I heard the larks sing strong and sweet, and saw robins. R. lives in that part of New Bedford three miles north of the town called the Head of the River, *i. e.* the Acushnet River. There is a Quaker meeting-house there. Such an ugly shed, without a tree or bush about it, which they call their meeting-house (without steeple, of course) is altogether repulsive to me, like a powder-house or grave. And even the quietness and perhaps unworldliness of an aged Quaker has something ghostly and saddening about it, as it were a mere preparation for the grave.

R. said that pheasants from England (where they are not indigenous) had been imported into Naushon and were now killed there.

Dec. 27. To Nantucket *via* Hyannis in misty rain.

On Cape Cod saw the hills through the mist covered with cladonias. A head wind and rather rough passage of three hours to Nantucket, the water being thirty miles over. Captain Edward W. Gardiner (where I

spent the evening) thought there was a beach at Barne-gat similar to that at Cape Cod. Mr. Barney, formerly a Quaker minister there, who was at Gardiner's, told of one Bunker of Nantucket in old times, "who had eight sons, and steered each in his turn to the killing of a whale." Gardiner said you must have been a-whaling there before you could be married, and must have struck a whale before you could dance. They do not think much of crossing from Hyannis in a small boat, — in pleasant weather, that is, — but they can safely do it. A boy was drifted across thus in a storm in a rowboat about two years ago. By luck he struck Nantucket. The outline of the island is continually changing. The whalers now go chiefly to Behring's Straits, and everywhere between 35 N. and S. latitude and catch several kinds of whales. It was Edmund Gardiner of New Bedford (a relative of Edward's) who was carried down by a whale, and Hussey of Nantucket who, I believe, was one to draw lots to see who should be eaten. As for communication with the mainland being interrupted, Gardiner remembers when thirty-one mails were landed at once, which, taking out Sundays, made five weeks and one day. The snow ten days ago fell about two inches deep, but melted instantly.

At the Ocean House I copied from William Coffin's Map of the town (1834) this: 30,590 acres, including 3 isles beside. 1050 are fresh ponds; about 750, peat swamp. Clay in all parts. But only granite or gneiss boulders.

Dec. 28. A misty rain as yesterday. Captain Gar-

diner carried me to Siasconset in his carriage. He has got from forty to forty-five or fifty bushels of corn to an acre from his land. Wished to know how to distinguish guinea cocks from guinea hens. He is extensively engaged in raising pines on the island. There is not a tree to be seen, except such as are set out about houses. The land is worth commonly from a dollar to a dollar and a half. He showed me several lots of his, of different ages, — one tract of three hundred acres sown in rows with a planter, where the young trees, two years old, were just beginning to green the ground, — and I saw one of Norway pine and our pitch mixed, eight years old, which looked quite like a forest at a distance. The Norway pines had grown the fastest, with a longer shoot, and had a bluer look at a distance, more like the white pine. The American pitch pines have a reddish, crisped look at top. Some are sown in rows, some broadcast. At first he was alarmed to find that the ground moles had gone along in the furrows directly under the plants and so injured the roots as to kill many of the trees, and he sowed over again. He was also discouraged to find that a sort of spindle-worm had killed the leading shoot of a great part of his neighbors' older trees. These plantations must very soon change the aspect of the island. His common pitch pine seed, obtained from the Cape, cost him about twenty dollars a bushel at least, about a dollar a quart, with the wings, and they told him it took about eighty bushels of cones to make one such bushel of seeds. I was surprised to hear that the Norway pine seed without the wings,

imported from France, had cost not quite \$200 a bushel delivered at New York or Philadelphia. He has ordered eight hogsheads (!!!) of the last, clear wingless seeds, at this rate. I *think* he said it took about a gallon to sow an acre. He had tried to get white pine seed, but in vain. The cones had not contained any of late (?). This looks as if he meant to sow a good part of the island, though he said he might sell some of the seed. It is an interesting enterprise.

Half-way to Siasconset I saw the old corn-hills where they had formerly cultivated, the authorities laying out a new tract for this purpose each year. This island must look exactly like a prairie, except that the view in clear weather is bounded by the sea. Saw crows, saw and heard larks frequently, and saw robins; but most abundant, running along the ruts or circling about just over the ground in small flocks, what the inhabitants call snowbirds, a gray bunting-like bird about the size of the snow bunting. Can it be the seaside finch? or the Savannah sparrow? or the shore lark?

Gardiner said that they had pigeon, hen, and other hawks, but there are no places for them to breed; also owls, which must breed, for he had seen their young. A few years ago some one imported a dozen partridges from the mainland, but, though some were seen for a year or two, not one had been seen for some time, and they were thought to be extinct. He thought the raccoons, which had been very numerous, might have caught them. In Harrison days some coons were imported and turned loose, and they multiplied

very fast and became quite a pest, killing hens, etc., and were killed in turn. Finally they turned out and hunted them with hounds and killed seventy-five at one time, since which he had not heard of any. There were foxes once, but none now, and no indigenous animal bigger than a "ground mole."

The nearest approach to woods that I saw was the swamps, where the blueberries, maples, etc., are higher than one's head. I saw, as I rode, high blueberry bushes and maple in the swamps, huckleberries, shrub oaks, uva-ursi (which he called mealy plum), gaultheria, beach plum, clethra, mayflower (well budded). Also withered poverty-grass, goldenrods, asters. In the swamps are cranberries, and I saw one carting the vines home to set out, which also many are doing. G. described what he made out to be "star-grass" as common.

Saw at Siasconset perhaps fifty little houses, but almost every one empty. Saw some peculiar horse-carts for conveying fish up the bank, made like a wheelbarrow, with a whole iron-bound barrel for the wheel, a rude square box for the body, resting on the shafts, and the horse to draw it after him. The barrel makes a good wheel in the sand. They may get seaweed in them. A man asked thirty-seven cents for a horse-cart-load of seaweed carried a quarter of a mile from the shore. G. pointed out the house of a singular old hermit and genealogist, over seventy years old, who, for thirty years *at least*, has lived alone and devoted his thoughts to genealogy. He knows the genealogy of the whole island, and a relative supports him by

making genealogical charts from his dictation for those who will pay for them. He at last lives in a very filthy manner, and G. helped clean his house when he was absent about two years ago. They took up three barrels of dirt in his room.

Ascended the lighthouse at Sancoty Head. The mist still prevented my seeing off and around the island. I saw the eggs (?) of some creature in dry masses as big as my fist, like the skins of so many beans, on the beach. G. told me of a boy who, a few years since, stole near to some wild geese which had alighted, and, rushing on them, seized two before they could rise, and, though he was obliged to let one go, secured the other.

Visited the museum at the Athenæum. Various South Sea implements, etc., etc., brought home by whalers.

The last Indian, not of pure blood, died this very month, and I saw his picture with a basket of huckleberries in his hand.

*Dec. 29.* Nantucket to Concord at 7.30 A. M.

Still in mist. The fog was so thick that we were lost on the water; stopped and sounded many times. The clerk said the depth varied from three to eight fathoms between the island and Cape. Whistled and listened for the locomotive's answer, but probably heard only the echo of our own whistle at first, but at last the locomotive's whistle and the life-boat bell.

I forgot to say yesterday that there was at one place an almost imperceptible rise not far west of Siasconset,

to a slight ridge or swell running from Tom Never's Head northward to (John) Gibbs's Swamp. This conceals the town of Nantucket. (John Gibbs was the name of the Indian Philip came after.) This, seen a mile off through the mist which concealed the relative distance of the base and summit, appeared like an abrupt hill, though an extremely gradual swell.

At the end of Obed Macy's History of Nantucket are some verses signed "Peter Folger, 1676." As for the sin which God would punish by the Indian war, —

"Sure 't is not chiefly for those sins  
that magistrates do name,"

but for the sin of persecution and the like, the banishing and whipping of godly men.

"The cause of this their suffering  
was not for any sin,  
But for the witness that they bare  
against babes sprinkling.

. . . . .  
"The church may now go stay at home,  
there's nothing for to do;  
Their work is all cut out by law,  
and almost made up too.

. . . . .  
"T is like that some may think and say,  
our war would not remain,  
If so be that a thousand more  
of natives were but slain.

“Alas! these are but foolish thoughts;  
God can make more arise,  
And if that there were none at all,  
He can make war with flies.”

*Dec. 31. P. M. — On river to Fair Haven Pond.*

A beautiful, clear, not very cold day. The shadows on the snow are indigo-blue. The pines look very dark. The white oak leaves are a cinnamon-color, the black and red (?) oak leaves a reddish brown or leather-color. I see mice and rabbit and fox tracks on the meadow. Once a partridge rises from the alders and skims across the river at its widest part just before me; a fine sight. On the edge of A. Wheeler's cranberry meadow I see the track of an otter made since yesterday morning. How glorious the perfect stillness and peace of the winter landscape!