

VII

MAY, 1856

(ÆT. 38)

May 1. 6 P. M. — To Hill.

I judge that the larch blossomed when the anthers began to be loose and dry and yellow on their edges. Say then the 28th. The water on the meadows is rapidly going down. I am now confined to the river for the most part. The water begins to feel as warm or warmer than the air when cool.

The scrolls of the ferns clothed in wool at Sassafras Shore, five or six inches high. *Thalictrum anemonoides* well out, probably a day or two, same shore, by the apple trees. *Viola ovata*¹ on southwest side of hill, high up near pines. How pleasing that early purple grass in smooth water! Half a dozen long, straight purple blades of different lengths but about equal width, close together and exactly parallel, resting flat on the surface of the water. There is something agreeable in their parallelism and flatness.

From the hilltop I look over Wheeler's maple swamp. The maple-tops are now, I should say, a bright brick red. It is the red maple's reign now, as the peach and the apple will have theirs. Looking over the swamps a quarter of a mile distant, you see dimly defined cres-

¹ Edith Emerson, Apr. 29th.

cents of bright brick red above and amid a maze of ash-colored branches.

May 2. The *tea lee* of the yellow-rump warbler¹ in the street, at the end of a cool, rainy day.

May 3. Another cool, rainy day. A staminate balm-of-Gilead poplar by Peter's path. Many of the catkins fallen and effete in the rain, but many anthers still red and unopen. Probably began five or six days ago.

May 4. P. M. — To Cedar Swamp *via* Assabet.

Among others, I see republican swallows flying over river at Island. Again I see, as on the 30th of April, swallows flying low over Hosmer's meadow, over water, though comparatively few. About a foot above the water, about my boat, are many of those little fuzzy gnats, and I suspect that it is these they are attracted by. (On the 6th, our house being just painted, the paint is peppered with the *myriads* of the same insects which have stuck to it. They are of various sizes, though all small, and there are a few shad-flies also caught. They are particularly thick on the coping under the eaves, where they look as if they had been dusted on, and dense swarms of them are hovering within a foot. Paint a house now, and these are the insects you catch. I suspect it is these fuzzy gnats that the swallows of the 30th were catching.)

The river is gone down so much — though checked by the rain of the 2d and 3d — that I now observe the tortoises on the bottom, a sternotherus among them.

¹ White-throat sparrow.

Hear the something like *two two two two twoé, ter té te two two* of the myrtle-bird, and see the bird on the swamp white oaks by Island.

The aspen there just begun to leaf; not quite the white maple. I observe that the river meadows, especially Hosmer's, are divided by two or more ridges and valleys (the latter alone now covered with water and so revealed), parallel with the river. The same phenomenon, but less remarkable, on the Wheeler meadow. Are they the traces of old river-banks, or where, in freshets, the current of the river meets the meadow current, and the sediment is deposited?

See a pectweet on Dove Rock, which just peeps out. As soon as the rocks begin to be bare the pectweet comes and is seen teetering on them and skimming away from me.

Having fastened my boat at the maple, met, on the bank just above, Luke Dodge, whom I met in a boat fishing up that way once or twice last summer and previous years. Was surprised to hear him say, "I am in my eighty-third year." He still looks pretty strong and has a voice like a nutmeg-grater. Within two or three years at most, I have seen him walking, with that remarkable gait. It is encouraging to know that a man may fish and paddle in this river in his eighty-third year. He says he is older than Winn, though not the oldest man in the town. Mr. Tolman is in his eighty-sixth year.

Went up Dodge's (an Englishman who once lived up it and no relation of the last-named) Brook and across Barrett's dam. In the Cedar Swamp *Andromeda caly-*

culata abundantly out; how long? *Viburnum nudum* leafing. *Smilacina trifolia* recently up; will apparently open in ten or twelve days.

At the dam, am amused with the various curves of jets of water which leak through at different heights. According to the pressure. For the most part a thin sheet was falling smoothly over the top and cutting short off some smaller jets from the first crack (or edge of the first plank), leaving them like white spikes seen through the water. The dam leaked in a hundred places between and under the planks, and there were as many jets of various size and curve. Reminds me of the tail-piece in Bewick, of landlord drawing beer (?) from two holes, and knowledge of artist shown.

Shad-flies on the water, schooner-like. Hear and see a goldfinch, on the ground.

May 6. To Clamshell by river.

Our earliest currant out. Oat spawn showing little pollywogs (?) in meadow water. The horse-chestnut and mountain-ash leafing. Knawel out at Clamshell; how long? *Cerastium* out there under the bank. That early white birch there has about done running sap. *Equisetum sylvaticum* a day or two on the ditch bank there.

May 7. Wednesday. Fresh easterly wind.

2 p. m. — To bear-berry on Major Heywood road.

In Deacon Hosmer's barn meadows, hear the *don't don't* of a bullfrog.

In the first hollow in the bank this side of Clam-

shell, where sand has been dug for the meadow, are a hundred or more bank swallows at 2 p. m. (I suspect I have seen them for some time) engaged in prospecting and digging their holes and circling about. It is a snug place for them,—though the upright portion of the bank is only four or five feet high,—a semi-circular recess facing the southeast. Some are within scratching out the sand,—I see it cast out of the holes behind them,—others hanging on to the entrance of the holes, others on the flat sandy space beneath in front, and others circling about, a dozen rods off over the meadow. Theirs is a low, dry, grating twitter, or rather rattle, less metallic or musical than the *vite vite* and twittering notes of barn and white-bellied swallows. They are white-bellied, dark winged and tailed, with a crescent of white [*sic*] nearly around the lower part of the neck, and mouse-colored heads and backs. The upper and greater part of this bank is a coarse sliding gravel, and they build only in the perpendicular and sandy part (I sit and watch them within three or four rods) and close to the upper part of it. While I am looking, they all suddenly with one consent take to wing, and circle over the hillside and meadow, as if they chose to work at making their holes a little while at a time only. I find the holes on an average about a foot deep only as yet, some but a few inches.

In the meanwhile I hear, through this fresh, raw cast wind, the *te-a-lea* of myrtle-birds¹ from the woods across the river.

The bear-berry will perhaps open to-morrow.²

¹ White-throat sparrows.

² It does.

I hear the evergreen-forest note close by; and hear and see many myrtle-birds, at the same time that I hear what I have called the black and white creeper's note. Have I ever confounded them?

Over the edge of Miles's mill-pond, now running off, a bumblebee goes humming over the dry brush. I think I saw one on the 5th also.

Miles began last night to let the water run off. The pond falls about three inches in twenty-four hours. The brook below is full of fishes, — suckers, pouts, eels, trouts, — endeavoring to get up, but his dam prevents. This morning his young man killed a number of pouts and eels and suckers with a shovel. Here he comes now, at 4 p. m., with a spear, and raises the gate and waits a few moments for the water, which was two or three feet deep just below the mill, to run off; and then I see a good-sized trout, four or five pouts, and several suckers, and one eel still making their way upward, though the water hardly covers their backs. They do not turn and go down the stream with the water which is thus suddenly and rapidly let off. Meanwhile this young man picks out half a dozen pouts, eels, and suckers with his spear. Twenty rods down the brook I saw many more suckers trying to make their way up. They found it difficult now to get over the bars where the water was very shallow, and were sometimes confined to the hollows between. I saw two or three in company trying to squeeze through a narrow passage under some alder boughs, which was blocked up by two spotted tortoises; and one large eel squirming directly over an indifferent wood turtle, concluding

to go down the stream, but it soon hid under a projecting bank. The pouts, etc., would suddenly bury themselves in the sand or mud and be lost. The fishes seemed unwilling to turn and go down the brook, and for the most part would come so near in the shallow water that they could easily be struck with the spear.

The water thus suddenly let off, there were many spotted and wood tortoises seen crawling about on the bottom. One little snapping (making the fifth of its species here), three and a half inches long, going down a few rods below the dam. This, like the larger ones, going down the brook. Where to? and why? He cannot be old enough to breed yet, and it is too early to be laying at the desert. This young snapping turtle was very strong-scented. Its tail appeared particularly long, as long as its shell, and very tapering, and very distinctly and sharply keeled. The first half-dozen of its dorsal serrations were very prominent and sharp, and its bill was very sharp also. It had four sharp points on each side of its shell behind, and I noticed that it swam better than other kinds of tortoises. Its head was as large as that of an ordinary wood tortoise. There were tracks of other turtles on the sandy bank.

The young man said that the eels came along as many as three in an hour in the night, and this morning there were a great many of them about the wheel. Last fall (this dam being made late in the fall), they found in the hollow under the wheel which they bailed out sixteen trout which weighed eight pounds. It is surprising how many fishes will run up and breed in such a little brook as this. The fishes generally would

conceal themselves in the mud under a projecting bank, or in some deep hole in the sand in mid-channel which communicated with the mud beneath.

One of those larger snapping turtles seized the one I had by the head and they braced and struggled awhile.

The miller now raises his gate and lets his pond run off. Do they not generally earlier?

For a week the road has been full of cattle going up country.

May 10. The third day of rain. The river has again gone over the meadows, which were almost bare.

P. M. — To Walden in rain.

R. Rice speaks of having seen myriads of eels formerly, going down the Charles River, young ones not longer than his hand, stopped behind a board at the dam. That once there, when repairing the dam, he saw, while standing on the bared bottom below it, a large eel come up close by it through hard gravel and he believed it had just come down the river and had penetrated through six feet in thickness of the same character, for the dam was carried down to that depth below the bottom of the river.

That the snapping turtle caught fish by lying buried in the mud with only his eyes out, was Rice's supposition.

Some Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum out in Cut woods; maybe a day, as it has rained steadily the last two days. It seems to bloom with or immediately after the bear-berry.

I would gladly walk far in this stormy weather, for now I see and get near to large birds. Two quails

whir away from the old shanty stubble-field, and two turtle doves go off from an apple tree with their *clikit*. Also at Walden shore a pigeon hawk (or else sharp-shinned), with deep-brown back, went off from close at hand.

I see there, just above the edge of the Pool in Hubbard's Wood Path, the *Viola blanda* passing into the *V. lanceolata*, which last also is now in bloom, probably earlier there than in wetter places. May have been as early as the *blanda*.

Where the pitch pines were cut some years ago on Thrush Alley, I now see birches, oaks, and pitch and white pines.

On the railroad causeway against Trillium Wood, I see an apparently native willow, a shrub, with greenish bark and conspicuous yellow catkins, now in full bloom, apparently a little earlier than the *Salix alba*, but its leaflets or bracts much less advanced and conspicuous. Another on the Walden road. What is it? Mr. Prichard's Canada plum will open as soon as it is fair weather.¹

May 11. Rains still.

I noticed the other day that the stump of the large oak at Clamshell Hill, cut down fifteen years ago or more, was quite rotten, while the trunk which lay by its side, having never been removed, was comparatively sound.

The Roman writers Columella and Palladius warn not to build in a low valley or by a marsh, and the same

¹ *Vide* 12th.

rule is observed here to-day. In the West the prudent settler avoids the banks of rivers, choosing high and open land. It suggests that man is not completely at one with Nature, or that she is not yet fitted to be his abode. Adam soon found that he must give a marsh a wide berth, — that he must not put his bower in or near a swamp in the new country, — else he would get the fever and ague or an intermittent fever. Either nature may be changed or man. Some animals, as frogs and musquash, are fitted to live in the marsh. Only a portion of the earth is habitable by man. Is the earth improving or deteriorating in this respect? Does it require to be improved by the hands of man, or is man to live more naturally and so more safely?

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp up Assabet.

There is at length a prospect of fair weather. It will clear up at evening this fourth day of the rain. The river is nearly as high as it has been this spring.

The *Salix alba* by my boat is out and beaten by the rain; perhaps three or four days in some places, but not on the 6th. It does not rain now, though completely overcast, but looks as if it would clear up before night.

There are many swallows circling low over the river behind Monroc's, — bank swallows, barn, republican, chimney, and white-bellied. These are all circling together a foot or two over the water, passing within ten or twelve feet of me in my boat. It is remarkable how social the different species of swallow are one with another. They recognize their affinity more than usual. On the prospect of fair weather after so long a storm,

the birds are more lively than ever. As I float through the Wheeler Indian field meadow, I see a veery hopping silent under the alders. The black and white creeper also is descending the oaks, etc., and uttering from time to time his *seeser seeser seeser*. What a rich, strong striped blue-black (?) and white bird, much like the myrtle-bird at a little distance, when the yellow of the latter is not seen. At a distance I hear the first yellow-bird.

The *Salix sericea* at Island rock is out, also the *S. cordata* off Prichard's, both apparently with *S. alba*. But I have not yet compared them (for date) quite accurately enough. I think I can pretty well distinguish the *sericea* by the grayness of the female catkins, twig and all, but am not sure I have seen the staminate. Neither am I sure that I see the staminate *S. cordata*. Those at Prichard's are apparently all female. There are many staminate ones now in full bloom in the Wheeler meadow, I suspect like that of the railroad causeway, male and female side by side, five rods north of *S. alba*; also male, west side below ring-post (*vide* May 10th), or they may be staminate plants of *S. cordata*, or some perhaps of *S. sericea*. *Vide* how many different kinds of leaves and mark them six weeks hence. *Vide* if those just off the north end of Holden Wood (Conantum) are all *S. cordata*, for there are many staminate ones like the last-named; also *vide* that one on the north side of the road and root fence beyond brook on Corner road (perhaps like the railroad one), male and female now a little past prime. All these willows blossom when the early willows, which bloom before leafing, are going to seed.

Large white maples are leafing.

I see, near the top of the bank at the further end of the first hemlocks, dirty-white fungi in nests, each about three quarters of an inch [in] diameter, without any thick rind which peels off. Each one is burst a little at top, and is full of dust of a yellowish rotten-stone color, which is perfectly dry and comes forth like a puff of smoke on being pinched, now after four days of rain, before the fair weather has come, and though each one is nearly half full of water. This dust certainly has but little affinity for moisture and might be of use in some cases.

I leave my boat in Hosmer's poke-logan and walk up the bank. A bluebird's nest and five eggs in a hollow apple tree three feet from ground near the old bank swallow pit, made with much stubble and dried grass. Can see the bird sitting from without.

There are a great many large flat black cockroach(?) -like beetles floating and paddling on the flood on the meadows, which have perhaps fallen in in the night (if not washed out of the grass): also a few of the thick dull reddish-brown ones.

May 12. A glorious day.

P. M. — Walked round by Dennis's and Hollowell place with Aleott.

It is suddenly very warm. A *washing* day, with a slight haze accompanying the strong, warm wind. I see, in the road beyond Luther Hosmer's, in different places, two bank swallows which were undoubtedly killed by the four days' northeast rain we have just had.

Puffer says he has seen two or three dead sparrows also. The sudden heat compels us to sit in the shade at the bars above Puffer's, whence we hear the first bobolink. How suddenly the birds arrive after the storm, — even yesterday before it was fairly over, — as if they had foreseen its end! How much life the note of the bobolink imparts to the meadow! I see a cultivated cherry in bloom, and Prichard's Canada plum will probably bloom to-morrow. The river is higher than yesterday, about the same as when highest before this spring, and goes no higher. Thus attains its height the day after the rain.

May 13. Hear a warbling vireo. Dandelions by roadside; probably several days in some places.

P. M. — Up river to *Kalmia glauca* Swamp.

In the swallows' holes behind Dennis's, I find two more dead bank swallows, and one on the sand beneath, and the feathers of two more which some creature has eaten. This makes at least seven dead bank swallows in consequence of the long, cold northeast rain. A male harrier, skimming low, had nearly reached this sand-pit before he saw me and wheeled. Could it have been he that devoured the swallows?

These swallows were $10\frac{3}{4}$ + alar extent, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches long; a wing $4\frac{3}{4}$ + by $1\frac{3}{4}$ +. Above they were a light brown on their backs, wings blackish, beneath white, with a dark-brown band over the breast and again white throat and side of neck; bill small and black; reddish-brown legs, with long, sharp, slender claws. It chanced that each one of two I tried weighed between

five and six sixteenths of an ounce, or between five and six drams avoirdupois. This seems to be the average weight, or say six drams because they have pined a little. A man who weighs one hundred and fifty pounds weighs sixty-four hundred times as much as one. The wing of one contains about seven square inches, the body about five, or whole bird nineteen. If a man were to be provided with wings, etc., in proportion to his weight, they would measure about 844 square feet, and one wing would cover 311 feet, or be about 33 feet long by 14 wide. This is to say nothing of his muscles.

The *Kalmia glauca* will not open for some days at least.

Mrs. Ripley told me last night that Hill said the toads rang till they died if their call was not answered or attended to.

At the swamp, hear the *yorrick* of Wilson's thrush; the tweezer-bird or *Sylvia Americana*. Also the oven-bird sings. Caterpillars' nests on an apple two inches [in] diameter. Downy amelanchier just out at Lupine Bank; elsewhere, *maybe*, a day or two.

Where my sap has dried on the white birch bark it has now turned a bright light red. What a variety of colors it assumes!

Potter has a remarkable field of mulleins, sown as thickly as if done with a machine (under Bear Garden Hill). I remarked them last year. William Wheeler thinks the seed lies in the ground an indefinite period ready to come up. I thought that it might have been introduced with his grain when it was sown lately. Wheeler says that many a pasture, if you plow it up

after it has been lying still ten years, will produce an abundant crop of wormwood, and its seeds must have lain in the ground. Why do not the chemists in their analyses of soils oftener mention the seeds of plants? Would not a careful analysis of old pasture sod settle the question?

I suspect that I can throw a little light on the fact that when a dense pine wood is cut down oaks, etc., may take its place. There were only pines, no other tree. They are cut off, and, after two years have elapsed, you see oaks, or perhaps a few other hard woods, springing up with scarcely a pine amid them, and you wonder how the acorns could have lain in the ground so long without decaying. There is a good example at Loring's lot. But if you look through a thick pine wood, even the exclusively pitch pine ones, you will detect many little oaks, birches, etc., sprung probably from seeds carried into the thicket by squirrels, etc., and blown thither, but which are overshadowed and choked by the pines. This planting under the shelter of the pines may be carried on annually, and the plants annually die, but when the pines are cleared off, the oaks, etc., having got just the start they want, and now secured favorable conditions, immediately spring up to trees. Scarcely enough allowance has been made for the agency of squirrels and birds in dispersing seeds.¹

At the Kalmia Swamp, the parti-colored warbler, and was that *switter switter switter switter swit!* also by it?²

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 188, 189; Riv. 231, 232.]

² Probably by this or the redstart, which last I distinguish on the 17th *inst.*

May 14. Air full of golden robins. Their loud clear note betrays them as soon as they arrive. Yesterday and to-day I see half a dozen tortoises on a rail, — their first appearance in numbers. Catbird amid shrub oaks. Female red-wing. Flood tells me he saw cherry-birds on the 12th of April in Monroe's garden.

May 15. A fog this morning. Our peach out.

P. M. — To beeches.

As I sat by the Riordan crossing, thought it was the tanager I heard? I think now, only because it is so early, that it *may* have been the yellow-throat vireo.¹

See also, for a moment, in dry woods, a warbler with blue-slate head and apparently all yellow beneath for a minute, nothing else conspicuous; note slightly like *tseep, tseep, tseep, tseep, tsit sitter ra-re-ra*, the last fast, on maples, etc. Maybe I heard the same yesterday.²

Northern wild red cherry out, cut by railroad; maybe day or two elsewhere. At Heywood Spring I see a clumsy woodchuck, now, at 4 P. M., out feeding, gray or grizzly above, brown beneath. It runs, or waddles, to its hole two or three rods off, and as usual pauses, listening, at its entrance till I start again, then dives in.

Viola cucullata abundant now. Just on the brink of this Heywood Spring, I find what may be the *Stellaria borealis* (if it is not the *longifolia*, but it is not in cymes like that; only a single flower to each axil, now at

¹ No; it must have been a tanager, which I hear frequently the 19th.

² No doubt the *Sylvia Americana*, blue yellow-back or parti-colored warbler, heard before.

least), though Bigelow makes its calyx-divisions nerveless. These are three-nerved, and one flower, at least, has five (!) styles. It has been out perhaps several days. Some of the flowers are without petals, others with those very deeply cleft or divided white petals. The others *may* have pollen.¹

Strawberry well out; how long? On *Amelanchier Botryapium*, many narrow dark bronze-colored beetles (say three fourths inch long) coupled and at same time eating the flowers, calyx and all. Night-warbler. Hickory leaflets not so large as beech. Beech leaves two inches long. Say it has leafed a day or two. White birch pollen. Beech not out yet.

Checker-berries very abundant on south side of Pine Hill, by pitch pine wood. Now is probably best time to gather them.

Cleared out the Beech Spring, which is a copious one. So I have done some service, though it was a wet and muddy job. Cleared out a spring while you have been to the wars. Now that warmer days make the traveller thirsty, this becomes an important work. This spring was filled and covered with a great mass of beech leaves, amid and beneath which, damp and wet as they were, were myriads of snow-fleas and also their white exuviae; the latter often whitening a whole leaf, mixed with live ones. It looks as if for coolness and moisture — which the snow had afforded — they were compelled to take refuge here.

Cerasus pumila, south side Pine Hill, not yet by Cut woods. Perceive *some* of that delicious meadow fra-

¹ Two inches high; leaves rather broad. *Vide* the 21st.

grance coming over the railroad causeway. Measured a chestnut stump cut last winter on Pine Hill; twenty-five inches in diameter and fifty-six rings.

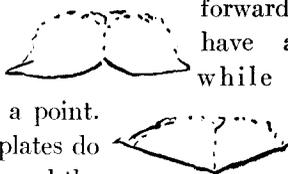
May 16. Rainy day.

May 17. Rain still or lowering.

P. M. — To my boat at Cardinal Shore, thence to Lee's Cliff.

Kingbird. The beech twigs I gathered the 15th show anthers to-day in chamber; so it probably blossoms to-day or to-morrow in woods. *Vaccinium vacillans* apparently a day or two at least. *Veronica serpyllifolia* abundant now on banks, erected. Maryland yellow-throat heard afar in meadows, as I go along the road towards Hubbard's Bridge. It is warm, but still overcast and sprinkling occasionally, near the end of the rain, and the birds are very lively. A goldfinch twitters over.

In the dry lupine bank pasture, about fifteen rods from the river, apparently travelling up the hill, I see a box tortoise, the first I have found in Concord.¹ Beside being longer (its upper shell five and one half by four and one fourth inches), it is much flatter and more oblong, less oval, than the one I found on Cape Cod last July. Especially it is conspicuously broader and flatter forward. The two rear marginal plates have a triangular sinus between them while the Cape Cod ones come to a point. The fifth and sixth marginal plates do not project by their edges beyond the

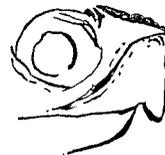


¹ Vide July 19.

shell. The yellow marks are much narrower, and more interrupted and like Oriental characters, than in the Cape Cod one. The sternum also is less oval, uniformly blackish-brown except a few slight bone- [?] or horn-colored blotches, while the Cape Cod one is light-yellow with a few brown blotches. The scales of the sternum in this are much less sharp-angled than in the Cape Cod one. The sternum more hollow or depressed.

The tail about three eighths of an inch long only, beyond the anus (?). The bill is very upright, somewhat like this:

like any Cæsar's.
legs covered
orange-colored
Hind ones
brown or bronze



A beak
Fore
with
scales.
mostly
with a

few orange spots. Beside the usual hiss, uttered in the evening as I was carrying it, a single, as it were involuntary, squeak much like a croaking frog. Iris, bright light red, or rather vermilion, remarkable. Head, brown above with yellow spots; orange beneath and neck.

The river is about a foot lower than on the 13th, notwithstanding yesterday's and to-day's rain.

At the Kalmia Swamp, see and hear the redstart, very lively and restless, flirting and spreading its reddish tail. The sylvias — *S. Americana* and redstart and summer yellowbird, etc. — are very lively there now after the rain, in the warm, moist air, amid the hoary bursting buds of maples, oaks, etc.

I stand close on the edge of the swamp, looking for

the kalmia. Nothing of its flower to be seen yet. The rhodora *there* will open in a day or two.

Meanwhile I hear a loud hum and see a splendid male hummingbird coming zigzag in long tacks, like a bee, but far swifter, along the edge of the swamp, in hot haste. He turns aside to taste the honey of the *Andromeda calyculata* (already visited by bees) within a rod of me. This golden-green gem. Its burnished back looks as if covered with green scales dusted with gold. It hovers, as it were stationary in the air, with an intense humming before each little flower-bell of the humble *Andromeda calyculata*, and inserts its long tongue in each, turning toward me that splendid ruby on its breast, that glowing ruby. Even this is coal-black in some lights! There, along with me in the deep, wild swamp, above the andromeda, amid the spruce. Its hum was heard afar at first, like that of a large bee, bringing a larger summer. This sight and sound would make me think I was in the tropics, — in Demerara or Maracaibo.¹

Nemopantes on that very swamp-edge. *Vaccinium corymbosum* (?) or the high blueberry.

Hear the first veery note and doubtless the *Muscicapa olivacea*. The *Sylvia Americana* (parti-colored warbler, etc.) is very numerous there, darting about amid the hoary buds of the maples and oaks, etc. It seems the most restless of all birds, blue more [or] less deep above, with yellow dust on the back, yellow breast, and white beneath (the male with bright-orange throat, and some with a rufous crescent on breast): wings and tail,

¹ Another on our cherry blossoms the next day. A long, slender black bill.

dark, black, with two white bars or marks, dark bill and legs.

At Lee's the *Turritis stricta* pods three inches long, and plant two and a half feet high by measure. Get some to press. *Myosotis stricta* above there, maybe several days. *Ranunculus bulbosus* a day or two at least. *Arenaria serpyllifolia*.

Mrs. Ripley showed me, from her son Gore in Minnesota, a few days ago, the first spring flower of the prairie there, a hairy-stemmed, slender-divisioned, and hairy-involucered, six-petalled blue flower, probably a species of hepatica. No leaves with it. Not described in Gray.¹

Yellow columbine well out at Lee's, one rod from rock, one rod east of ash.

How plainly we are a part of nature! For we live like the animals around us. All day the cow is cropping the grass of yonder meadow, appropriating, as it were, a part of the solid earth into herself, except when she rests and chews the cud; and from time to time she wends her way to the river and fills her belly with that. Her food and drink are not scarce and precious, but the commonest elements of which nature is composed. The dry land in these latitudes, except in woods and deserts, is almost universally clothed with her food, and there are inland seas, ready mixed, of the wine that she loves. The Mississippi is her drink, the prairie grass her food.

The shrub oak and some other oak leafets, just expanding, now begin to be pretty.

Within the shell of my box turtle, in the cavity be-

¹ Yes. They say it is *Pulsatilla patens*.

tween its thighs and its body, were small dry leaves and seeds, showing where it laid. From these I should say it had come from amidst the alders.

May 18. Ed. Emerson says he saw at Medford yesterday many ground-birds' nests and eggs under apple trees.

R. W. E.'s black currant¹ (which the wild *Ribes floridum* is said to be much like), maybe a day.

R. W. E. says that Agassiz tells him he has had turtles six or seven years, which grew so little, compared with others of the same size killed at first, that he thinks they may live four or five hundred years.

P. M. — To Kalmia Swamp.

Go across fields from R. W. E.'s to my boat at Cardinal Shore. In A. Wheeler's stubble-field west of Deep Cut, a female (?) goldfinch on an oak, without any obvious black, is mewing incessantly, the note ending rather musically. When I get over the fence, a flock of twenty or more, male and female, rise from amid the stubble, and, alighting on the oaks, sing pleasantly all together, in a lively manner.

Going along the Spring Path, hear an oft-repeated *tchip tchar*, *tchip tchar*, etc., or *tchip tcharry* (this is a common note with birds) from a large bird on a tree-top, a sort of flaxen olive. Made me think of a female rose-breasted grosbeak, though we thought the beak more slender.

On the surface of the water amid the maples, on the Holden Wood shore where I landed, I noticed some of

¹ Apparently it is American.

the most splendid iridescence or opalescence from some oily matter, where the water was smooth amid the maples, that I ever saw. It was where some sucker or other fish, perchance, had decayed. The colors are intense blue and crimson, with dull golden. The whole at first covering seven or eight inches, but broken by the ripples I have made into polygonal figures like the fragments of a most wonderfully painted mirror. These fragments drift and turn about, apparently, as stiffly on the surface as if they were as thick and strong as glass. The colors are in many places sharply defined in fine lines, making unaccountable figures, as if they were produced by a sudden crystallization. How much color or expression can reside in so thin a substance! With such accompaniments does a sucker die and mix his juices with the river. This beauty like the rainbow and sunset sky marks the spot where his body has mingled with the elements. A somewhat similar beauty reappears painted on the clam's shell. Even a dead sucker suggests a beauty and so a glory of its own. I leaned over the edge of my boat and admired it as much as ever I did a rainbow or sunset sky. The colors were not faint, but strong and fiery, if not angry.

Found a young turtle about two inches long of a flat roundish form, with scales as rough as usual, but a dull reddish or yellowish spot in middle of each scale, and edges beneath were also a pinkish red. Can it be a young yellow-spot?

I have not noticed a tree sparrow since December!

A *Sylvia Americana*, — parti-colored warbler, — in

the Holden Wood, sings *a, tshrea tshrea tshrea, tshre' tshritty tshrit'*.

One low *Kalmia glauca*, before any rhodora thereabouts. Several kalmias, no doubt, to-morrow. The rhodora there maybe to-morrow. Elsewhere I find it (on Hubbard's meadow) to-day.

The swamp is all alive with warblers about the hoary expanding buds of oaks, maples, etc., and amid the pine and spruce. They swarm like gnats now. They fill the air with their little *tshree tshree* sprayey notes. I see close by, hopping close up to the main stem of young white pines, what you would call a Maryland yellow-throat, but less chubby, yellow throat, beneath, and vent, and dark under tail, black side; but hear no note. Also another clear pure white beneath, and vent, and side-head; black above, finely marked with yellow; yellow bars on wings; and golden crown; black bill and legs: with a clear, sweet warble like *tche tche tche, tchut tchutter we*. Can this be a chestnut-sided warbler, and I not see the chestnut?¹ Hopping amid oak twigs? I think I hear a yellow-throated vireo. Hear a tree-toad.

Sailed back on Hubbard's redstart path, and there saw a mud turtle draw in his head, of which I saw the half, about eight rods off. Pushed to the spot, where the water was about a foot deep, and at length detected him spread out on the bottom, his monstrous head and tail and legs outspread, probably directly under where he had appeared. At first, I suspect, I mistook him for a rock, for he was thickly covered with a short green moss-like *conferva* (?), — a venerable object,

¹ It is. *Vide* 20th. Saw it also the 17th here.

a true son of the meadow, suggesting what vigor! what naturalness! Perchance to make the moss grow on your back without injuring your health! How many things can he sustain on his shell where the mosses grow? He looked like an antediluvian under that green, shaggy shell, tougher than the rock you mistake it for. No wonder the Indian revered him as a god. Think of the time when he was an infant. There is your native American, who was before Columbus, perchance. Grown, not gray, but green with the lapse of ages. Living with the life of the meadow. I took off my coat, stripped up my shirt-sleeve, and caught him by his great rough tail. He snapped at me and my paddle, striking his snout against the side of the boat till he made it bleed. Though I held him down with an oar for a lever and my foot on it, he would suddenly lift all together, or run out his head and knock the oar and my leg aside. He held up his head to me and, with his mouth wide open, hissed in his breathing like a locomotive for a quarter of an hour, and I could look straight down his monstrous gullet ten inches. The only way to hold him and paddle too was to turn him on his back, then, putting the end of a paddle under a seat, slant it over his sternum and press my foot on the other end. He was fourteen and one half inches long by twelve at the broadest places, and weighed twenty-five pounds and three ounces. The claws were an inch and a quarter long beyond the skin, and very stout. You had to exert yourself to turn him over on a plane surface, he held down so firmly with his claws, as if grown to it. He took my hand into his shell with his tail and took the skin

off it. The sternum is broadest forward. This turtle was not roundish like the shell I have, but nearly an oblong square; nearly as long as that, but much less wide. The usual number of scallops behind.

I know of a young lady who, when riding, came across one in the road, which not wishing to run over, she got out and tried to drive it out of the way with her whip, but it "screamed" at and terrified her. A caravan could not make him budge under those circumstances.

E. Emerson finds half a dozen yellow violets. A hair-bird's nest building. I hear whip-poor-wills about R. W. E.'s.

May 19. Thick fog in the morning, which lasted late in the forenoon and left behind it rainy clouds for the afternoon.

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp.

Landed at Island Neck, and saw a small striped snake in the act of swallowing a *Rana palustris*, within three feet of the water. The snake, being frightened, released his hold, and the frog hopped off to the water. Hear and see a yellow-throated vireo, which methinks I have heard before. Going and coming, he is in the top of the same swamp white oak and singing indolently, *ullia — celya*, and sometimes varied to *celyce*. The tanager is now heard plainly and frequently.

I see running along the water's edge on the Island Neck, amid the twigs, a new bird, slender and somewhat warbler-like, but plainly a *Turdus*, with a deep, dark chocolate-brown back (apparently uniformly), apparently cream-colored beneath, handsomely and abundantly

spotted with dark brown, vent white, light flesh-colored legs, yellowish or cream-colored line over eyes. Methinks it teetered or wagged its tail. Flew soon and was quite shy. I think it must have been the *Turdus aquaticus* from its dark chocolate-brown back and running along the water's edge. Feel pretty sure, yet that is said to have white (?) over eye. I lost it before I had examined fully. Quite a discovery. *Vide* golden-crowned thrush carefully.

Apple in bloom; some, no doubt, earlier. Night-hawk's squeak. Red-wing's nest made, and apparently a kingbird's (?), on black willow four feet above water.¹

As I sail up the reach of the Assabet above Dove Rock with a fair wind, a traveller riding along the highway is watching my sail while he hums a tune. How inspiring and clysian it is to hear when the traveller or the laborer from a call to his horse or the murmur of ordinary conversation rises into song! It paints the landscape suddenly as no agriculture, no flowery crop that can be raised. It is at once another land, the abode of poetry. I am always thus affected when I hear in the fields any singing or instrumental music at the end of the day. It implies a different life and pursuits than the ordinary. As he looked at my sail, I listened to his singing. Perchance they were equally poetic, and we repaid each other. Why will not men oftener advertise me of musical thoughts? The singer is in the attitude of one inviting the muse, — aspiring.

The Maryland yellow-throat amid the alders sings now, *whit-we-chee whit-we-chee whit-we-chee whit-whit*,

¹ It is a robin's without mud.

the last two fast, or *whit* alone, or none. Wood pewee. Woolly aphides on alder.

The *Smilacina trifolia* will apparently bloom to-morrow or next day.¹

Returning, stopped at Barrett's sawmill while it rained a little. Was also attracted by the music of his saw. He was sawing a white oak log; was about to saw a very ugly and knotty white oak log into drag plank, making an angle. Said that about as many logs were brought to his mill as ten years ago, — he did not perceive the difference, — but they were not so large, and perhaps they went further for them. I observed that he was not grinding. No, he said, it was the first day he had not had a grist, though he had plenty of water; probably because the farmers were busy planting. There [were] white oak, pine, maple, and walnut logs waiting to be sawed.

A bullfrog, sluggish, by my boat's place.

On the 13th I saw washed up to the edge of the meadow, this side of Clamshell, portions of one or two large bluish-white eggs, apparently a size larger than hens' eggs, which may have been laid last year by some wild fowl in the meadow.

If my friend would take a quarter part the pains to show me himself that he does to show me a piece of roast beef, I should feel myself irresistibly invited. He says, —

“Come and see
Roast beef and me.”

I find the beef fat and well done, but him rare.

¹ In house, the 21st.

May 20. Fir-balsam (ours in grove) apparently two or three days, for it [is] almost entirely effete; cones white, one inch long nearly.

Was awaked and put into sounder sleep than ever early this morning by the distant crashing of thunder, and now, —

P. M. (to Beck Stow's), —

I hear it in mid-afternoon, muttering, crashing in the muggy air in mid-heaven, a little south of the village as I go through it, like the tumbling down of piles of boards, and get a few sprinkles in the sun. Nature has found her hoarse summer voice again, like the lowing of a cow let out to pasture. It is Nature's rutting season. Even as the birds sing tumultuously and glance by with fresh and brilliant plumage, so now is Nature's grandest voice heard, and her sharpest flashes seen. The air has resumed its voice, and the lightning, like a yellow spring flower, illumines the dark banks of the clouds. All the pregnant earth is bursting into life like a mildew, accompanied with noise and fire and tumult. Some œstrus stings her that she dashes headlong against the steeples and bellows hollowly, making the earth tremble. She comes dropping rain like a cow with overflowing udder. The winds drive her; the dry fields milk her. It is the familiar note of another warbler, just arrived, echoing amid the roofs.¹

I see, on a locust in the locust [*sic*] burying-ground, the *Sylvia striata*, or black-poll warbler, busily picking about the locust buds and twigs. Black head and above, with olive (green) wings and two white bars; white all

¹ [Channing, p. 123.]

beneath, with a very distinct black line from throat to shoulders; flesh-colored legs; bill, dark above, light beneath. Hear no note. Saw it well.

At Moore's Swamp on Bedford road, myriads of pollywogs half an inch long darken or blacken the shore, chiefly head as yet. Bank swallows are very lively about the low sand-bank just beyond, in which are fifty holes.

I now see distinctly the chestnut-sided warbler (of the 18th and 17th), by Beck Stow's. It is very lively on the maples, birches, etc., over the edge [of] the swamp. Sings *eech eech eech* | *wichy wichy* | *tehea* or *itch itch* | *itch* | *witty witty* | *tehea*. Yet this note I represented on the 18th by *tehe tehe tehe* | *tehut tehutter we*.

The andromeda has apparently been out several days, but no buck-bean there yet, nor will for a day or two.¹

See and hear a stake-driver in the swamp. It took one short pull at its pump and stopped. Two marsh hawks, male and female, flew about me a long time, screaming, the female largest, with ragged wings, as I stood on the neck of the peninsula. This induced me to climb four pines, but I tore my clothes, got pitched all over, and found only squirrel; yet they have, no doubt, a nest thereabouts.

Haynes the carpenter calls that large glaucous puff that grows on the *Andromeda paniculata*, swamp-apple; says he has eaten as much as three bushels (!) of them when he was a boy, and likes them. That is what he was raised on.

After I got him home, I observed a large leech on the upper shell of my great turtle. He stoutly resisted being

¹ Vide 21st.

turned over, by sinking his claws into the ground; was aware that that was his weak side, and, when turned, would instantly run out his head and turn himself back. No wonder the Orientals rested the world on such a broad back. Such broad health and strength underlies Nature.

May 21. Wednesday. P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

Chelidonium. *Rubus triflorus* abundantly out at the Saw Mill Brook; how long? A robin's nest without mud, on a young white oak in woods, with three eggs. Saw two splendid rose-breasted grosbeaks with females in the young wood in Emerson's lot. What strong-colored fellows, black, white, and fiery rose-red breasts! Strong-natured, too, with their stout bills. A clear, sweet singer, like a tanager but hoarse somewhat, and not shy. The redstarts are inquisitive and hop near. The *Polygonatum pubescens* there, in shade, almost out; perhaps elsewhere already.

At the trough near Turnpike, near Hosmer's Spring, the (perhaps) *Stellaria borealis* of the 15th. I am still in doubt whether it is a stellaria or cerastium. This is quite smooth, four to five inches high, spreading and forking, with a single flower each fork, on a long peduncle; square-stemmed, oblong-lanceolate leaves, slightly ciliate and connate: ten stamens, five long, five short. Aspect of a smooth cerastium, but this has four to seven styles, oftenest perhaps five, all apetalous, except one petal shorter than the calyx; leaves one-nerved, sepals three-nerved! The bare and small plants are reddish-stemmed. Can it be *Stellaria longipes*?

The buck-bean in Everett's Pool abundantly out, say four or five days. It is earlier than at B. Stow's. *Myosotis laxa* by Turnpike, near Hosmer Spring, may have been out several days; two or three at least.

May 22. P. M. — To *Viola Muhlenbergii*, which is abundantly out; how long? A small pale-blue flower growing in dense bunches, but in spots a little drier than the *V. cucullata* and *blanda*. *Veronica peregrina*, apparently several days. A yellow butterfly over the middle of the flooded meadow. *Polygonatum pubescens* at rock. *Aralia nudicaulis*, apparently a day or two where heat is reflected from the rock on Island. Choke-cherry and crataegus there in a day or two. The *Cornus florida* does not bloom this year. Hemlock and creeping juniper, not quite yet. The red and cream-colored cone-shaped staminate buds of the black spruce will apparently shed pollen in one to three days? They are nearly half an inch long. I see beds of anemones amid or under clumps of hazels, of this form:  a mass of their pretty leaves and flowers, five or six feet in diameter. I see a common *Vaccinium vacillans* (?), with a leaf much like that of the *V. Pennsylvanicum*, also the common *V. vacillans* with more rounded glaucous leaves.

I noticed a cobweb the other day, between the tholepins of my boat, which was perfectly black with those little fuzzy guats which fly at that height and take shelter from wind in boats and the like.

A little clammy hairy cerastium (?) (like a *Cerastium*

viscosum, slender and erect), about three inches high, will open in a day or two on the rock near the bass.¹

May 23. P. M. — To Heywood Spring.

Sorrel well open on west side of railroad causeway against H. Wheeler's land. Noticed the earliest willow catkins turned to masses of cotton yesterday; also a little of the mouse-ear down begins to be loose. Hear often and distinctly, apparently from H. Wheeler's black spruce wood-lot, the *pho phoe-ar* of the new muscicapa. Red-eye and wood thrush. Houstonias whiten the fields, and looked yesterday like snow, a sugaring of snow, on the side of Lee's Hill. Heard partridges drum yesterday and to-day. Observed the pads yesterday just begun to spread out on the surface with wrinkled edges and here and there a bullet-like bud; the red white lily pads still more rare as yet.

The stellaria at Heywood Spring must be the same with that near the E. Hosmer Spring, though the former has commonly fewer styles and rather slenderer leaves. It appears to be the *S. borealis*, though the leaves are *narrowly* lanceolate; has three to seven styles; a few petals (cleft almost to the bottom) or none; pods, some larger than the calyx² and apparently ten-ribbed; petals, now about the length of the sepals.³

After sunset on river.

A warm summer-like night. A bullfrog trumps once. A large devil's-needle goes by after sundown. The ring of toads is loud and incessant. It seems more prolonged

¹ Vide June 5th.

² At last twice as long.

³ Keeps, and grows and blossoms, in a tumbler.

than it is. I think it not more than two seconds in each case. At the same time I hear a low, stertorous, dry, but hard-cored note from some frog in the meadows and along the riverside; often heard in past years but not accounted for. Is it a *Rana palustris*?

Dor-bugs hum in the yard, — and were heard against the windows some nights ago. The cat is springing into the air for them.

May 24. Pratt gave me the wing of a sparrow (?) hawk which he shot some months ago. He was coming from his house to his shop early in the morning when he saw this small hawk, which looked like a pigeon, fly past him over the Common with a sparrow in his clutches, and alight about six feet up the south button-wood in front of Tolman's. Having a small Maynard's revolver in his pocket, loaded with a ball size of a pea, he followed, and, standing twenty-two paces from the tree in the road, aimed and brought down both hawk and sparrow at a distance of about six rods, cutting off the wing of the former with the ball. This he confessed he could not do again if he should try a hundred times. It must be a sparrow hawk, according to Wilson and Nuttall, for the inner vanes of the primaries and secondaries are thickly spotted with brownish white.

Humphrey Buttrick says that he hears the note of the woodcock from the village in April and early in May (too late now); that there were some this year breeding or singing by the riverside in front of Abel Heywood's. He says that when you see one spring right up straight into the air, you may go to the spot, and he will surely

come down again after some minutes to within a few feet of the same spot and of you. Has known a partridge to fly at once from one to two miles after being wounded (tracked them by the blood) without alighting. Says he has caught as many as a dozen partridges in his hands. He lies right down on them, or where he knows them to be, then passes his hands back and forth under his body till he feels them. You must not lift your body at all or they will surely squeeze out, and when you feel one must be sure you get hold of their legs or head, and not feathers merely.

To-day is suddenly overpoweringly warm. Thermometer at 1 P. M., 94° in the shade! but in the afternoon it suddenly fell to 56, and it continued cold the next two days.

May 25. 10 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond with Blake and Brown.

I found five arrowheads at Clamshell Hill. Saw, just before, on the flat meadow on the right, feeding on the edge of the meadow just left bare, along with the peewees, a bird a size larger with an apparently light-brown back, a ring or crescent of black on its breast and side of neck, and a black patch including the eye. Can it be the *Charadrius semipalmatus*? or else *Wilsonius*? It looks like the latter in Wilson's larger plates. It reminded me of the piping plover, but was not so white; and of the killdeer, but was not so large.

Pyrus on side of Fair Haven Hill, yesterday at least. Huckleberry there, yesterday also at least. On the Cliffs, orobanche; *Veronica arvensis*, the little one on

the rocks there, well out. Also low blackberry on the rocks a day or two. Blackburnian warbler and rose-breasted grosbeak.

Lupines, apparently yesterday. Young phœbes in the Baker house. The bird flitted out as we entered. I reached to an old shelf and felt the warm but callow young. *Azalea nudiflora* in garden. *Polygala*, fringed, by path beyond Hubbard Grove; how long?

May 27. To Kalmia Swamp with Sanborn.

Fringilla melodia's nest in midst of swamp, with four eggs, made partly of usnea; two stories, *i. e.* upon an old nest, elevated one foot above the water; eggs with very dark blotches. Kalmia in prime, and rhodora. Apparently the oldest-blossomed kalmia the palest. Saw probably a deer mouse jumping off by the side of the swamp; short leaps of apparently ten inches. The pyrus (smooth-leaved) out apparently a day or two. See men fishing, one or two, and often perceived the meadow fragrance.

My three kinds of birch sap have now become more acid, especially the white and canoe birch. The black birch is milder and more agreeable. With sugar it is an agreeable drink. I prefer it to cream-o'-tartar water. This is the real birch wine.

May 28. Rainy.

To Painted-Cup Meadow.

Potentilla argentea, maybe several days. *Trifolium pratense*.

A seringo or yellow-browed (??) sparrow's nest about

ten or twelve rods southwest of house-leek rock, between two rocks which are several rods apart northwest and southeast; four eggs. The nest of coarse grass stubble, lined with fine grass, and is two thirds at least covered by a jutting sod. Egg, bluish-white ground, thickly blotched with brown, yet most like a small ground-bird's egg, rather broad at one end, pretty fresh.¹

A cricket creaks. *Hypoxis erecta*, maybe a day or two. *Thalictrum dioicum* abundantly out, apparently in prime, male and female, some effete, perhaps a week, near wall in Painted-Cup Meadow, fifteen to eighteen inches high.

I think it was a mass of young *Thalictrum Cornuti* leaves which had that rank, dog-like scent.² Painted-cup pollen a good while ago. Saw, under an apple tree, nearly half a pint of some white grub with a light-reddish head, like a small potato-worm, one inch long, and part of a snake-skin, making the greater part of the faeces of some animal, — chiefly the grubs, — a formless soft mass. Skunk?

May 29. P. M. — Ride to Painted-Cup Meadow.

Two *Arethusa bulbosa* at Hubbard's Close apparently a day or two. Golden senecio there, a day or two, at least. White clover. *Ranunculus repens* (sepals not recurved and leaves a spotted look), apparently a day.

¹ July 2d, at Natural History Rooms, Boston, saw the egg of yellow-shouldered sparrow, light-colored with a ring of brown spots at large end; that of Savannah sparrow all mottled over with brown!! *Vide* June 26.

² Yes; and this thalictrum is generally but a foot high now and expanding.

Geum rivale, well out. Common cratægus, apparently some days. *Juniperus communis*, a day or two at least, probably more.

To return to Painted-Cup Meadow, I do not perceive the rank odor of *Thalictrum Cornuti* expanding leaves to-day. How more than fugacious it is! Evidently this odor is emitted only at particular times. A cuckoo's note, loud and hollow, from a wood-side. Found a painted-cup with more yellow than usual in it, and at length Edith found one perfectly yellow. What a flowery place, a vale of Enna, is that meadow! Painted-cup, *Erigeron bellidifolius*, *Thalictrum dioicum*, *Viola Muhlenbergii*, fringed polygala, buck-bean, pedicularis, orobanche, etc., etc. Where you find a rare flower, expect to find more rare ones. Saw sanicle well flower-budded. Cherry-birds on the apple trees. Blue-eyed grass, probably to-morrow.

May 30. P. M. — To Linnæa Wood-lot.

Apparently this flower does not bloom there this year.¹

The lady's-slipper in pitch pine wood-side near J. Hosmer's Desert, probably about the 27th. That desert, small as it now is (for it is partly reclaimed by using pine boughs as a salve), is scored with circles (like that of Provincetown) made by the dry *Polygonum articulatum* blown about. It is but a lesser Sahara, and I cannot see it without being reminded that, in some parts of the globe, sand prevails like an ocean. What are those black masses of fibrous roots mixed with smaller dark-gray, cone-like tubers, on the sand?

¹ Yes, it did later.

Return *via* Clamshell. Yellow clover abundantly out, though the heads are small yet. Are they quite open? *Comandra umbellata*, apparently a day or two.

Frank Harding caught five good-sized chivin this cold and windy day from the new stone bridge. The biggest one was quite red or coppery; the others but slightly, except the head. Is it a peculiarity of age?

May 31. P. M. — To Clintonia Swamp (Hubbard's) Grove.

A ground-bird's nest (*melodia* or *graminea*?), with six of those oblong narrow gray [eggs] speckled with much brown at end. When I looked again half an hour after, one egg was hatched. The bird would steal out through the grass when I came within a rod, and then, after running a rod or two, take to wing. Tied a string about a low pyrus a rod or so to right of entrance to Hubbard's Pyrus Swamp and two feet west of a pitch pine stump, and pressed a twig of it. Clintonia. *Nuphar advena* first noticed; may have been out some time in some places, but just out in river. Pink, common wild, maybe two or three days.¹

Sundown. — To Hill and Island.

Have noticed within a week, from time to time, the water-line on the bushes along the shore — the water going down — unusually distinct, for while the exposed parts have leaved out, the lower are quite bare and black.

Hemlock and creeping juniper, where had not

¹ For they are very abundant at Heywood Peak on June 1st; some white.

bloomed the 22d, are now entirely out of bloom on the hill. How short their flower lasts!

Ranunculus Purshii, probably earlier in some places, but water high. That little cerastium on the rock at the Island, noticed the 22d, which probably opened about that time, is now out of bloom. It is about three inches high and has long pods, more than twice the length of the calyx, which turn upward. I have seen no petals. It *seems* to be the *C. nutans* (?), from size, erectness, and form of pods and leaves. It has viscid hairs or with glands at end. The red oak is so forward, compared with the rest, that it is more difficult to get a sprig in flower small enough (its leaves) to press.

As I return in the dusk, *many* nighthawks, with their great spotted wings, are circling low over the river, as the swallows were when I went out. They skim within a rod of me. After dusk these greater swallows come forth, and circle and play about over the water like those lesser ones, or perhaps making a larger circuit, also uttering a louder note. It would not be safe for such great birds to fly so near and familiarly by day. It has been *very* cold for two or three days, and to-night a frost is feared. The telegraph says it snowed in Bangor to-day. The hickory leaves are blackened by blowing in the cold wind.